



HARMONY GROVE SCHOOL DISTRICT

**2621 Highway 229
Benton, Arkansas 72015
Phone: (501)778-6271**



July 23, 2020

Harmony Grove Students, Staff, and Parents/Guardians,

The purpose of this correspondence is to provide you information based on the most current guidance and planning by our administrative team and Ready for Learning committee on how to reopen our schools this Fall. The Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) have released guidance for the return to onsite instruction in the fall of 2020. The guidance has been posted as the Planning for Re-Engagement and Response Levels for On-site Learning documents on the DESE Arkansas Ready for Learning webpage. The Harmony Grove School District will follow the guidance as presented in these documents as well as monitor updates provided by DESE, ADH, the Governor's office and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The information provided in this document is accurate at the time of distribution, but may change at any time.

In accordance with the Governor's announcement and DESE guidelines, "Blended Learning" for students will resume on August 24, 2020. The guidance describes Blended Learning as a traditional school setting (face-to-face/onsite) with the added element of a digital format that could be used to provide remote or virtual learning on a very short notice if the need arises. HGSD will be expected to have the ability to pivot from onsite instruction to remote instruction quickly and easily. This will require both teachers and students to be ready to shift to digital formats, such as Google Classroom and Buzz/Lincoln Learning, to be able to access the content and instruction remotely.

In addition to the traditional school setting, HGSD will also be offering a completely virtual learning option through the Harmony Grove Virtual Academy. This is a home based virtual setting where students will work through the state-approved curriculum, which may be provided by HGSD faculty or a third-party provider. We believe this option is more appropriate for motivated and strongly supported students. For this reason, separate information is being developed for this program. Virtual academy students are HGSD students and will graduate from Harmony Grove School District with a high school diploma. They are also eligible to participate in extracurricular activities. Parental support will be a crucial component of the virtual academy model. HGSD will provide a Chromebook to students that do not have access to a device that supports virtual learning.

It is important to note that any public school student who withdraws from a public school district to enroll in a homeschool program will not be eligible to participate in AAA extracurricular activities for a period of one year.

As a learning community, we are facing a global pandemic never before seen in any of our lifetimes. The impact on our school community has been significant. Attached you will find our "Ready for Learning" Procedures and Protocols designed to mitigate, not eliminate, the risk of COVID-19. The HGSD Ready to Learn Committee procedures below are driven by the health recommendations and guidance shared with us by DESE, ADH, and CDC.

Regards,
Heath Bennett, Superintendent



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READY FOR LEARNING PROCEDURES & PROTOCOLS

Based on the guidance mentioned above, the Harmony Grove School District is planning to implement the following procedures. Please understand that the HGSD procedures for each of the major topics could/will change based upon new or updated guidance from DESE and ADH.

Weekly Schedule for Blended Learning:

All students that chose the Blended Learning/Onsite instructional environment will attend on campus 4 days a week (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday) with Wednesday being reserved for special instruction on a case by case basis. Teachers will report to campus 5 days a week and will be available to work with all students remotely on Wednesdays. School facilities will not open to students until 7:30 am. All students should be picked up by 3:30 pm, unless involved in extracurricular activities.

Face Coverings:

Arkansas Executive Order 20-37 and the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) guidance mandates face coverings/masks should be worn by children ages 10 and up, and by adults. With that information, adults and students fourth grade and older will wear face masks when they cannot be socially distanced. HGSD will provide every student with three washable face masks.

Face coverings/masks should not be used by anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious; or anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance. It is recommended that, as appropriate, the expectations regarding an eligible student's wearing of a mask be addressed in a student's IEP, 504, or Health Plan.

If social distancing in the classroom is possible (small class size with students spaced at least 6' apart), students will be able to remove masks when seated. Anytime a student is out of his/her desk, or in transition to the bathroom or other areas, students will be required to wear a mask. (This might change with ADH guidelines.) While seated at desks, teachers may require students to wear a mask if the teacher is working closely with that student.

Face coverings/masks that may cause disruption in the school environment will be



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removed and students will be provided a substitute mask. When students are actively involved in a physical activity (PE) and social distanced, masks are not required.

The wearing of masks for students (4th-12th) is required due to Executive Order and ADH guidance. If a student refuses, the refusal could be considered insubordination and addressed according to the Student Handbook. The first step in the disciplinary process will be a parent contact. Continued refusal to wear a mask may result in placement in the Virtual Academy.

Students in grades Kindergarten through 3rd grade may wear a mask for short periods of time during the day such as during transitions or when receiving small group instruction.

Social Distancing:

Social distancing will be observed and encouraged as much as possible in the on-site school settings. Safeguards and protocols are mentioned elsewhere in this document that outline how HGSD is working to promote social distancing and the use of face coverings when social distancing is not possible. With current enrollment numbers and number of classrooms available for instruction, social distancing will not be feasible in most classrooms.

Health Screening Protocols:

Parents will be expected to screen their children each day using the [current screening guidelines](#) for the ADH prior to entering any school bus or building. Staff will be required to complete the screening each day. Similar screening protocols for visitors to buildings will be used at the front desk.

Cleaning Protocol:

Harmony Grove School District will follow the standard daily, weekly, and monthly cleaning specifications. In addition, the following additional measures will be in place from the first day of school:

- Every classroom will be equipped with disinfectant to be used in between groups of students or several times a day.
- The daily and weekly Flu and Cold Protocol will be implemented, which adds:
 - ➔ Frequent wipe downs of high touch areas and
 - ➔ Consistent antiviral misting of rooms.



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Bus Transportation:

Because social distancing is not possible on school buses, parents who are able to transport their students are encouraged to do so. All students will wear a mask on school buses. All bus drivers will be required to wear a mask. Students will have assigned seats. Seat assignments may be based on first on/last off in the back of the bus and last on/first off in the front. This will limit the unnecessary passing of students on the bus. Each school bus will be disinfected after every trip. Hand sanitizer will be available to students as they board and depart the bus.

Recess:

Elementary and Middle School students will have outdoor recess. Certain restrictions, such as assigning areas for groups to play or wearing masks, may be added as required by CDC guidance.

Student Hydration:

Every school building will be equipped with one or more water bottle filling stations by the start of school in August. All students are encouraged to carry a clear, labeled, personal water bottle with a screw-on lid to school. Beverages will be limited to water only.

Building Visitors:

All persons will be prohibited from entering school buildings except:

- School or District staff,
- Students enrolled at the school,
- Guardians picking up ill or injured children,
- Guardians attending scheduled instructional meetings,
- Professionals providing necessary services to children or staff.

Please understand that at this time we are unable to accommodate guests for lunch or other occasions such as classroom parties.

General Building Operations:

Implementation of guidelines will vary depending on building configuration and student population.

- Modifications for Physical Distancing- Classroom furniture will be arranged to maximize distance between students seating, but physical distancing is not always possible.



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- Hallway Traffic- Hallways will be divided down the center to create two one-way lanes for student travel. Markings will be placed on the floor (six feet apart) to remind students to socially distance as much as possible. Class dismissal will be staggered as much as possible. No lockers will be issued for student use.
- Bathroom Breaks- A building schedule of restroom breaks will be created. Students will be asked to wash hands during breaks. Restrooms will be disinfected regularly during the day.
- Drop-off/Pick-up- Procedures will be reviewed and modified where possible to maximize distancing by building. All parents should remain outside the school building for drop-off and pick-up except under extenuating circumstances, such as an ill or injured child. If you choose to exit your vehicle when picking up your student, you must wear a mask and socially distance yourself from staff or other parents. We will be releasing detailed information for traffic patterns at a later date.

In the Event an Individual Tests Positive for COVID-19:

HGSD will follow the latest guidance from the ADH and the CDC. HGSD's designated POC (Person of Contact) will contact ADH directly on the school hotline and share information on the circumstances. Based on specific circumstances on the case, ADH will advise the district on next steps. Due to HIPPA and other privacy laws, school personnel will not share information regarding positive student infections. **This process could result in a brief closure of a single school within the district or multiple schools.** In the event of a brief closure, HGSD will pivot to remote learning for those students/classes affected.

Athletics:

Athletes have already begun their return to campus to begin practice based on ADH and Arkansas Activities Association (AAA) guidance. Unless guidance changes, we are planning for sports activities in the fall with possible modifications as required by the ADH and AAA.

Band and Choir:

At this time, we are awaiting further guidance on both band and choir from the ADH and AAA. We will plan to serve students in band and/or choir classes while observing the most current guidelines from DESE, ADH, and AAA.

Cafeteria and Food Service:

HGSD is reviewing cafeteria protocols at each building to determine how we can best utilize existing space to meet ADH distancing and large gathering recommendations. Due to space limitations, **outside visitors will not be allowed in the cafeteria.** Lunch schedules,



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procedures, and locations may have to be adjusted depending on further guidance. If students choose to not eat a school lunch, they can still bring their lunch from home. Outside food deliveries must be labeled with student name and grade/teacher and may only be delivered by the parent or guardian.

Everyone has Responsibilities:

The CDC created the following checklist for parents and a checklist for teachers that list general expectations to help prevent community spread while providing an education to our students.

Parents should encourage good prevention habits with their family including:

- Avoid close contact with people,
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash,
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds,
- Keep your child at home if sick with any illness,
- Be prepared if your child is ordered to quarantine or school is temporarily closed.

Teachers should:

- Encourage students to stay home when sick,
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects in the classroom,
- Monitor absenteeism,
- Implement a blended plan to continue educating students through digital learning when needed.

Additional and updated information will be posted on the HGSD website, Facebook page, Twitter, and Instagram as it becomes available. Continue to visit our social media sites frequently as we will modify procedures/protocols as guidance is updated from DESE and ADH.

Thank you for your patience and support as we work together to make plans to reopen school with your child's safety as our top priority.